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## ABSTRACT

A comparison of photographs in four German magazines published from 1926 to 1933 with photographs appearing in "Fortune" and "Life" from 1930 to 1938 reveals specific patterns and techniques by German photographers, who later emigrated to the United States, that served as models for "Life" and for subsequent American magazines. The analysis of this evolution of the photo essay consisted of identifying the form or layout used (photomontages, regular features, single picture pages, multiple page series photographs, and use of graphic elements), and the styles of individual photographers (based on credit lines under photographs). The cosmopolitan tendencies of the Weimar years in Germany and the political upheaval prior to World War II helped to create a new context for the flow of photographers, picture editors, picture agencies, and ideas about the form and content of contemporary photojournalism across national boundaries. German photographers coming to the United States found that they could adapt their styles to the evolving patterns of American photojournalism, and their work contributed to the development of the photo essay in the United States. But the form, content, and social practice of photojournalism that evolved in Germany in the 1920s was recast after 1933 into ideological themes more appropriate to the American cultural context. (RL)

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PHOTOGRAPHS AS POLITICAL STATEMENTS:  
A CASE STUDY OF PICTURE EDITING IN THE GERMAN ILLUSTRATED PRESS  
AND ITS IMPACT ON AMERICAN PICTURE MAGAZINES, 1926-38

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Photojournalism, as a form of social discourse, evolves in a relationship between the technical properties and potentials of photography, and a set of social practices and values which inform and guide its use as a medium for conveying news to a mass audience. In the United States in the 1930s and in Germany a decade before, a new form of photojournalism was emerging as mass circulation picture magazines evolved what soon came to be called the photo essay. Characterized by stories told through groups of related photographs, usually by individual photographers, these magazines presented people and events in ways compatible with and stimulating to their readers' "social eye." As popular expressions of "socially-structured 'ways of seeing'" their particular social and historical situations,<sup>1</sup> the content of these magazines, and the form of their photo essays in particular, become significant issues in the cultural history of Germany and the United States in the decades preceding World War II. Similarities between the German and American publications and the flow of ideas about photography between practitioners in each country during this period provide a framework for investigating the evolution of the photo essay as a cultural form in the context of the picture magazines in two contrasting historical settings.

From its first issue in November 1936, Life stood at the forefront of the American picture magazines. In circulation and visibility it outshone Fortune, its elder sister in the Luce family of magazines. First published in 1930, Fortune had enjoyed steady growth throughout the Depression, even at a dollar an issue. Focusing on business and related issues, it offered readers well-written articles and impressive photographs in a lavishly designed package. While its use of related photographs to complement a majority of its articles and its publication of series by prominent photojournalists set important precedents for subsequent publications,<sup>2</sup> Fortune's cost and content prevented it from ever acquiring a mass audience. The first American magazine to be founded on the idea of the picture story was short-lived Roto, begun in 1934 by David Munro, an editor who had returned from Europe enthusiastic about the picture magazines he had seen there.<sup>3</sup> Roto had problems of faulty distribution that Life never had to face. The well-promoted first issue nearly sold out the first day, and circulation climbed steadily until by 1943, nearly four million copies were being sold each week.

Look, the bi-weekly publication of Gardner Cowles Jr., followed close behind with its first issue in January 1937. Cowles had been experimenting with picture stories in the Sunday supplement of his family newspapers, the Des Moines Register and Tribune. His idea that Americans were ready for a national picture magazine was based on a survey he had hired George Gallup to conduct in 1925. Not only would readers prefer pictures to type, Gallup reported, but they preferred looking at related pictures,<sup>4</sup> and that meant picture stories. By the time the United States entered World War II, Look's circulation had climbed to over two million per issue.

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The fortnightly Pic began later in 1937, and the monthly Click followed in 1938, as well as many others with circulations of under 500,000. By 1938, one writer reported the existence of thirteen American picture magazines, with a combined circulation of sixteen million.<sup>5</sup> Most were short-lived publications, but their proliferation suggests that the time of the picture magazine had arrived in America.

At the heart of these publications was the "picture story," the phrase initially and most commonly applied to a series of photographs on a single subject, arranged in a narrative sequence. The idea that such a series could serve as an "essay," implying that the photojournalist serves not as a simple recorder but as an interpreter of events, was made explicit in 1937, when Life published an ad for itself entitled "The Camera as Essayist." The ad referred to a series by Alfred Eisenstaedt on Vassar College as an "essay" of 24 photographs.<sup>6</sup>

Among the staff at Life, the first few years were seen as an "experimental period" during which the photo essay, as distinct from the picture story, was evolving as a new journalistic form. Due largely to its stature as the first, most successful magazine of its type, the assumption that Life was independently "perfecting the photo essay"<sup>7</sup> is still accepted widely and uncritically.

There were, in fact, many different currents feeding into the new picture magazines. The cultural and social environment of the United States of the mid-1930s was one in which documentary expression flourished, characterized in particular by an appreciation for what the camera could reveal.<sup>8</sup> Photographs were used by government agencies, in social research, and by the mass media in ways not previously seen in the United States. Experimentation with new forms and uses of photography to convey the

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urgency of contemporary events can be seen in the work of the Farm Security Administration photographers documenting the effect of the Depression on rural Americans,<sup>9</sup> in the rotogravure supplements to Sunday newspapers, and in weekly illustrated magazines including Fortune and Vanity Fair.<sup>10</sup> This search for new models and forms of documentary expression had little respect for national boundaries, creating ample opportunity for German photography to have its impact felt in the American picture press.

Since 1933, America had been host to a majority of the Germans who were emigrating from Nazi domination. A high proportion of these were intellectuals, with journalists and photographers well represented.<sup>11</sup> The emigrees included many who had worked for the picture agencies and picture magazines which had flourished in Germany since the mid-1920s. Alfred Eisenstaedt was among them, bringing his experience working for the Associated Press Picture Service in Berlin and several magazines to the pre-publication staff of Life in 1936. Fritz Goro, Fritz Henle, Kurt Korff, Stefan Lorant, Ernest Mayer, Martin Munkaschi, Walter Sanders, and Kurt Szafranski were others who had worked with German picture magazines, as photographers, editors or through picture agencies, and who continued to pursue photojournalistic careers in the United States. Many others, including Otto Hagel and Hansel Mieth, became photojournalists after their arrival in the United States, bringing with them notions of picture magazines framed by German models. Entry into a profession in photography did not depend on language facility or knowledge of a specific professional code, as was the case, for example, with lawyers. The emigrees' background and experience coupled with the American publications' receptivity to allow German photojournalists to have a personal impact on the picture magazines.

Picture agencies were one important vehicle the emigrees had for

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getting their work into print in the United States. Many had worked for German agencies, including Mauritius, Dephot, and Weltrundschau, and the America-based agencies operated along parallel lines. Black Star, the agency established by Ernest Mayer (formerly head of Mauritius), Kurt Szafranski, and Kurt Kornfeld on their arrival in America, provided many of the emigree photographers with assignments for photo essays in the American magazines.<sup>12</sup> Kurt Korff, working as a consultant for Time, Inc., introduced several emigrees to that organization.

Prior to 1933, several links had already been established between the American and German picture press. Erich Salomon had established an international reputation for his candid photographs of government leaders and diplomats by 1929 when William Randolph Hearst brought him to America.<sup>13</sup> Salomon also did several assignments for Fortune, beginning in 1931.<sup>14</sup> Fortune had also sent Bourke-White to Germany on several occasions where she was introduced to the German publications while working on photo essays on industry and the German army.<sup>15</sup> According to Gidal, quite a few of the German photojournalists had contact with the American picture press before the emigration began.<sup>16</sup>

The German press prior to the Nazi takeover reflected the political diversity and the cultural interests that characterized life during the years of the Weimar Republic. The intellectual milieu described by the "New Objectivity" (Neue Sachlichkeit) and Bauhaus activities, by experimental theatre and literary expression confronting the experience of war and economic hardship, by an infusion of politics into artistic expression, provided the context for the rise of photography as a documentary and artistic form of communication. This movement was fueled by the development of the hand-held camera and faster lenses capable of candid photography in low-light

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situations. By 1925, a few photographers were using Leica cameras which offered the conveniences of smaller size and the use of perforated film, making it possible to take sequences of photographs with ease.<sup>17</sup>

In this context photography, and specifically series of photographs, took on an increasingly important role in the German mass media. The weekly Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (HI2) was the first to go beyond using single photographs to illustrate text.<sup>18</sup> Founded in 1890, this publication of the House of Ullstein in the 1920s, with Kurt Korff as editor and Kurt Szafranski as publishing director, became the most widely read picture magazine of its kind in Europe.<sup>19</sup> The vast range of Ullstein publications included others noteworthy for their photojournalism. Die Dame was a leading journal in the profitable field of women's magazines, and the pocket-sized monthly Uhu combined short stories, reportage and photography to appeal to "middle-brow tastes."<sup>20</sup> In 1923, the Münchner Illustrierte Presse (MIP) began, in conscious imitation of HI2, and soon these two magazines each had a circulation of half a million.<sup>21</sup> Hungarian-born Stefan Lorant moved from editing the Sunday supplement of the Berlin Börsenkurier to the Berlin desk of MIP in 1928. Under his editorship, MIP lost its provinciality and became the foremost picture magazine in Germany until the Nazis arrested Lorant in 1933. In Köln, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and elsewhere in Germany, illustrated magazines were begun which increasingly emphasized photoreportage. Most of these were not started as photojournalistic magazines: they included reportage and fiction, serialized novels, humor, and poetry. However, under the influence of sophisticated editors, picture agencies which undertook production of photoreportage as well as distribution, and the growing ranks of amateur-turned professional photographers, by the end of the decade these magazines had established themselves publications which

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featured picture stories prominently in each issue. The topical subject matter and graphic presentation of these series underscored increasingly what Gidal describes as their "'essay' character."<sup>22</sup>

A parallel development in the Communist press also had an impact on the liberal magazines. The Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ) had emerged in 1925 from efforts by Willi Münzenberg, founder of the International Communist Youth, to use photography to arouse the political consciousness of the proletariat. To avoid dependence on bourgeois picture agencies, Münzenberg founded the Arbeiterfotograf, a publication which encouraged workers' documentation of social and economic conditions.<sup>23</sup> In AIZ, photomontage and photographs from the "Worker-Photographer" movement were synthesized with documents and text into dynamic layouts with high propagandistic intent. Photomontages by John Heartfield frequently appeared on the cover and as double-page spreads in the middle of the magazine, angry and ironic responses to the rise of fascism and the threat of war. AIZ's audience included editors of other publications who, while not subscribing to its political perspective, were stimulated by AIZ's use of photography.

In 1932, amid growing unemployment, rising violence and anti-semitism, and widespread dissension among the liberals and on the left, the Nazis emerged as the strongest party in Germany. By January 1933, when Hitler was named Chancellor, the picture magazines had lost their independence and many journalists were leaving the country. The outpouring of people carrying new ideas about the form and content of photojournalism is one testimony to the richness and diversity of Weimar culture--to what Peter Gay has called "the commonplace quality of cosmopolitanism"--forced into exile by the Nazis.

The variety of contributions German scholarship, literature, and

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social thought have made to American life since 1930 are well documented,<sup>24</sup> supporting the argument that the American picture press also would have felt the impact of German emigres work. References to the German picture magazines have been frequent in discussions of the origin of the American counterpart. Theodore Peterson mentions "the illustrated magazines from abroad" as an influence on the American picture magazines.<sup>25</sup> Daniel Mich argues that "genuine picture journalism, in which related photographs are employed in sequence and integrated with text to tell a story, flourished in Europe, particularly in Germany, several years before it reached this country."<sup>26</sup> Photographic historian Helmut Gernsheim places the origin of "modern reportage" in Germany, arguing "that the oft-repeated claim that photoreportage originated with Life completely lacks foundation."<sup>27</sup> Several authors associated with Life disagree, including former editor Wilson Hicks, who has described the Ullstein magazines as "experimental," and when compared as a whole with Life, their content appears "amorphous": "More often than not . . . the 'picture story' was a grouped miscellany rather than an ordered and progressive narration. Word treatment was rarely up to photographic treatment, and often it was inadequate even by traditional standards. Ullstein did not find the touchstone of integration by which picture, words and idea become one. . . ." <sup>28</sup> However, R. Smith Schuneman's examinations of HIZ, Die Dame, and MIP point out photographic and editing techniques that have as their foundation the concept of a picture story or essay.<sup>29</sup>

## II

The present study investigates specific patterns in the use of photography in a sample of German magazines of 1926-33, with particular

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emphasis on MIP under the editorship of Stefan Lorant. A comparison with the use of photographs in Fortune, 1930-36, as an important forerunner of the American picture magazines, and Life, 1936-38, as the first mass-circulation magazine to emphasize photojournalism, was expected to reveal specific patterns and techniques which pre-dated their appearance in the United States, and thus could have served as a model for Life and subsequent American magazines.

The German magazines included in the investigation were HIZ, 1925-33, and Die Dame, 1930-31, the two Ullstein publications which paralleled Life and Fortune in format and the organizational relationships between their respective staffs. MIP was examined during the years 1926-33 when the impact of Lorant's work on its form and content would be evident. AIZ, 1926-33, although not a mass-circulation magazine, was included, since it was looked at regularly by German photographers and editors. In preliminary research, the names of German emigres working as photojournalists were identified.<sup>30</sup> As the magazines were examined, issue by issue, all series of photographs credited to the known emigres were analyzed by noting the subject matter, the number and size of photographs, other aspects of layout design, the photographer's style as apparent from the published photographs, and the form and amount of the text accompanying each series.<sup>31</sup> By confining the research to the work of known emigres, it was expected that features distinctive to their individual styles would emerge, while allowing for a comparison of the way their work changed in the context of the American publications.

The two aspects of this analysis considered the most pertinent to identifying the evolution of the photo essay were the layout, that is, the form used to present the series in the magazine, and the style of the

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individual photographer. The way a photographer frames a subject, the aspects of the subject he or she chooses to photograph, and how these patterns change as the photographer documents different subjects are the principle aspects of style that reveal the photographer's interpretation or point of view on the subject. The form in which the photographer's series is then presented in the magazine is the result of an editing process which varies somewhat according to the publication. As photographers become familiar with these patterns, they learn to adapt aspects of their style on future assignments to provide the editors with material that conforms to the magazine's format. The social structure which evolves as the repetition of specific photographers' styles interacts with the editing process guiding selection and layout produces in the picture magazine a pattern for selecting and interpreting current events, that is, the magazine's point of view of the society it presents to its readers.

A framework for analyzing style and layout was developed from research into the "mature" photo essay. In her analysis of the procedures followed on Life's Detroit desk from 1949 to 1951, Caroline Dykhouse has identified how a group of photographers, by systematically including specific types of shots of each subject, taught themselves the style that Life editors were looking for.<sup>32</sup> By comparing the photographic series the German emigres made for the German and American magazines with the formula used on Life magazine a decade later, it is possible to determine how closely the earlier publications foreshadowed the concept of the photo essay as defined in the post-war years in America.

### III

The editorial concept guiding the structure of each magazine was

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evident in the proportion of the magazine occupied by photographs, and the subject matter of these images. Life devoted more pages to photographs and, by integrating photographs with text for each published article beginning with its first issue, demonstrated that the editorial concept of a picture magazine, relying predominantly on photographs to convey current events, was the foundation of this magazine. HIZ and MIP evolved toward this concept during the years examined. Serialized fiction, poetry, humorous features illustrated with sketches, articles on travel and entertainment declined in frequency or were supplemented with photographs presented singly and in series, as these magazines devoted more space to photographs of contemporary figures and events related to current political and social issues. Die Dame, as its name suggests, was conceived of as a women's magazine, but excluded from this concept articles related to homemaking or childrearing. Fashion, entertainment, travel, literature, and the arts formed its content, with photographs as the dominant form of illustration, appearing as examples of contemporary art and singly or in series as supplements to both fiction and non-fiction articles during the years examined. The editorial concept defining Fortune as a business magazine incorporated art, and specifically, photography, in a way closely parallel to Die Dame. Trends in design, industrial development, politics and the arts were presented in its pages, illustrated by colored drawings and photographs. Single photographs or "portfolios" by individual photographers appeared in each issue tied tangentially to the world of business and industry with brief captions. AIZ used photographs with an explicit propagandistic intent. Fiction and non-fiction accounts focused on various aspects and symbols of workers' solidarity and their oppression in capitalist society. Frequently these articles were dominated by complex montages of

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photographs combined with slogan-like headlines. Although published in German, its content and presumably its audience were international. Photography increasingly appears to have been used in AIZ as a kind of international language. Poster-like montages began to appear on the cover and in the centerfold, and series of photographs with little text appeared with increasing frequency during the years examined.

When the magazines published photographs in groups or series, as opposed to individual photographs, several patterns were followed. Multiple photographs appeared in most of these publications as a) photomontages combining several photographs into a single image; b) regular features in which a page or more of photographs was presented under a continuing title; c) single pages of two to six photographs on a single topic, accompanied by minimal text; and d) longer series of two or more pages of photographs presented with text of varying lengths on the same or a related topic.

#### Photomontages

The combination of multiple photographs into a single image, usually incorporating a headline or slogan, is the outstanding feature in AIZ's use of photographs. The best examples of this technique are in John Heartfield's work. His ability to synthesize diverse elements into powerful political propaganda expresses most clearly the theme of the magazine. A montage of Hitler watering an oak tree with German armaments weighing down the branches is typical of his expressions against war and fascism.<sup>33</sup> His work became a regular feature of AIZ in 1930, and continued after the magazine went into exile in Prague in 1933.<sup>34</sup> Usually Heartfield created his montages in response to specific events. "Black or White--In Struggle United," a montage of two fists raised in unison, appeared in an issue devoted to racial injustice. The issue followed the guilty verdict brought against the

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Scottsboro Boys, nine black men accused of raping two white women in Alabama in 1931.<sup>35</sup> Heartfield's montages usually appeared on the cover or as the centerfold, and like other earlier montages in AIZ apparently were designed for poster display. The earlier montages were assembled in a less complex manner, but followed similar political themes. Eight photographs were combined for a centerfold in 1926, for example, "The Stormtroopers of the Proletariat," with a young soldier charging up the middle of the page.<sup>36</sup>

These early photomontages are typical of the layout style of AIZ, in which multiple photographs in a variety of shapes and sizes are morticed into each other, often creating a symmetrical juxtaposition. Variations on this use of photography often appears in a less radical form in MIP and BIZ, perhaps showing the influence of AIZ on the liberal magazines. Certainly Lorant admired Heartfield's work, and included at least one of his montages in the British magazine, Picture Post, which Lorant edited from 1938 to 1940.<sup>37</sup> Photomontages are not evident in Die Dame or Fortune, but this style of editing does appear in early issues of Life. Hicks refers to these "many pages of physically abused photographs" as "holdovers from the past," which lost ground as Life "came to respect the photograph as complete in its original composition."<sup>38</sup>

#### Regular Features

Most of the magazines included pages of photographs tied to specific themes as regular features in each issue. Die Dame and Fortune were again the exception, added evidence that photography was not the central focus of these two magazines. In AIZ, readers could turn to a page of "Pictures of the Week" (Bilder der Woche) and another page of photographs "From Around the World" (Aus Aller Welt). Both showed news photographs of recent events, and captions under photographs "From Around the World" appeared in both

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German and Esperanto, the language constructed for international communication, to appeal to AIZ's non-German audience. Spiel und Sport and Arbeiter Sport were other regular features, sometimes taking two pages to display photographs of amateur athletic teams and events. MIP included a page of pretty or slightly amusing pictures each week under the title Ach Wie Nett ("Oh, How Nice"). Sometimes this was a series on one theme, such as the hotel workers skiing at St. Moritz.<sup>39</sup> Usually, however, the feature included photographs of different places compiled from the work of different photographers or different agencies.

Life's weekly features included "Pictures to the Editor," on a remarkable variety of subjects submitted by readers, and "The Camera Overseas," photographs from various sources showing recent events of international significance. More noteworthy in the present context is "Life Goes to a Party," a feature reporting on a different gathering each week. A camp picnic, a museum or theatre opening, a field trip of oceanographers would become "Life's Party," attended with much advance planning by one or more photographers, often including Alfred Eisenstaedt.

#### Single Picture Pages

Single pages of photographs on a single subject occasionally were published in the German magazines. These usually treated narrowly-defined topics that could be presented in two to six photographs and did not pursue separate themes the subject might suggest. An important person, a specific place, such as a Berlin cafe or a London dog show, or a brief event, such as a children's party, were considered appropriate for single page treatment. These appeared most frequently in MIP and HIZ.

Both of these popular magazines morticed photographs into each other

on these pages, frequently with type fit around the irregularly-shaped photographs, but such techniques were used less radically than in AIZ. Die Dame's use of single pages of photographs were designed more simply and appeared less frequently. Readers were more likely to see a page in Die Dame devoted to a single large image, as an example of an interesting work of photographic art. Fortune, too, rarely presented single pages of photographs. The large display typical of that magazine meant that frequently one or two photographs would take up a single page. Life, too, rarely devoted single pages to a single subject: the longer series of three or more pages was more typical of the American magazine.

The photographs incorporated into these essays were usually made from a middle distance or close to the subject. The editors did not consider the overview or long distance photograph appropriate for these narrower subjects. Close portraits, often a detail of a person at work or in conversation, were important to the structure of these essays. AIZ nearly always presented a photograph of one person, dominating the page, with the background dropped out behind him or her. These protagonists were not identified by name, but appeared as symbols of the individual worker standing for all workers.

Exceptions to the pattern of emphasizing individual or small group activities on the single picture pages did occur, however. HIZ began a series in 1931, for example, on innovations in different cities in Germany. Usually a presentation of a new building, such as a factory or train station, "What's New in . . . ?" (Was gibt es Neues in . . . ?) showed the building from a distance, complemented with details photographed from a middle distance.<sup>40</sup>

### Multiple Page Series of Photographs

Series of related photographs presented across two or more pages were found in all the magazines examined. In Die Dame, as few as four photographs were frequently displayed large, across four pages. These images, although related to each other, were not always on the same subject as the accompanying text. Photographs of different dancers by Murkasol, for example, were laid out around a fiction story.<sup>41</sup> When the text was minimal, Die Dame's tendency to use photographs large in a simple layout was again evident. Fortune exhibited strong parallels with Die Dame in its display of photographs, and in the balance between photographs and text. However, Fortune also published longer articles or a group of articles on different aspects of the same theme, the paper industry, for example,<sup>42</sup> with photographs illustrating each aspect. Occasionally Fortune presented a series of photographs called "portfolios," with no text other than simple captions on a topic related to an article appearing elsewhere in the issue.

In AIZ, at the other extreme, photographs and text were intertwined using most of the same layout techniques seen in its single pages. The longer text which usually accompanied the longer photographic series was frequently overprinted with one or more photographs. AIZ also began using photography in 1928 to tell more complex stories, for example to show the working conditions of American miners on strike, and to examine "behind the scenes" of the German criminal justice system.<sup>43</sup> These picture stories were structured to include photographs from a variety of distances and angles, and occasionally a radical angle was used to convey a sense of the work being done by the subjects of the story.

Beginning in 1928, MIP and AIZ were relying more heavily on

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photographs alone to portray subjects more complex than those seen in the single picture pages. Several paragraphs of text were typically the maximum that appeared with many picture series. Five or six photographs was the usual number displayed across two pages, with one or two of these taking up a half page or more each. Several small photographs, two or three inches square, were often morticed into the larger images, and circular cropping was not infrequent. The series included a wide variety of angles on the subject, usually an overview, several middle distance photographs of groups of people interacting, close environmental portraits of individuals and details of the subject's surroundings. Frequently several small photographs taken from the same or parallel point of view appeared in a row or column.

The principal contrast between MIP and HIZ appeared in the way Lorant used the graphic elements within the photographs when designing a layout. By arranging them to allow the composition of individual photographs to guide the reader's eye through the series, he created an overall effect that was more simple and sophisticated than his use of the manipulative techniques of morticing, circular cropping, and dropping out backgrounds would suggest.

In its earliest issues, Life was already using series of photographs displayed across several pages as its principal feature. Photographic series did not gradually take over pages previously dominated by text, as had been the case on MIP and HIZ in the late 1920s. The text accompanying each series of photographs was kept to a minimum in most Life articles, and the photographs themselves showed the same kind of variety in composition that was evident in MIP and HIZ. The graphic content of the individual photographs was not often used as successfully as in MIP, and this factor, combined with

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the tendency on Life to use techniques of morticing and cropping photographs in a variety of shapes contributed to the haphazard appearance of many of Life'early layouts. Typography was also used in a less sophisticated manner than in the German publications. The overall effect was frequently exciting, if somewhat unfinished, the result of using interesting photographs in a "busy" layout.

Life's series tended to be longer than those appearing in any of the German magazines. Six to eight pages was not an unusual length, with each double page devoted to a different aspect of the subject. This allowed the magazine to examine a topic in greater depth, and then offer it to readers in smaller pieces. Each double page thus presented a different visual chapter or angle of a larger story.

MIP and HIZ, on the other hand, often serialized topics that had several significant aspects to them. These articles appeared in several subsequent issues, each exploring a different aspect of the subject in both text and photographs. A series on East Prussia, written and photographed by Lorant himself, is one of the best examples in MIP.<sup>44</sup> An attempt to reexamine the post-war years in a series "How Was It Exactly?" was less successful photographically, due to the historical nature of the topic.<sup>45</sup> A series on German artists and intellectuals ran in MIP for several months in 1931, focusing on a different individual each issue, to show their life outside the public eye. Such series are most frequent in MIP, but do appear in HIZ and, occasionally, in AIZ.

#### IV

Not all of the series of photographs appearing in this selection of magazines can be considered photo essays. Photomontages result in a single

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image, never a variety of photographs arranged to convey different aspects of a single subject. The regular features which appeared most frequently in these magazines were collections of photographs of different subjects that fit under the loose theme of "Pictures of the Week" or "The Camera Overseas." Several of the features allowed for a single cohesive topic to be treated in each issue. These, of which "Life Goes to a Party" is the best example, were usually presented as a series showing different aspects of the same subject.

The single page picture series and the expanded versions of these series into several continuous pages, occasionally continuing from issue to issue, presented the best opportunity for the photo essay form to develop. In cases where the photographs were the principal vehicle for telling the story, and any accompanying text was tied to the subject of those photographs, the series approached a narrative cohesion which could appropriately be called an essay. Examples of this type of series were found in each publication, but were most frequent in MIP and BIZ from 1928 to 1933, and in Life from 1936 to 1938. Within these three publications, the types of photographs used and the way they were arranged in the magazines was important to the cumulative impact of the series. When a series showed a subject from a variety of distances and angles, and the photographs were arranged in a way that utilized their composition as well as their content to create a cohesive whole, which could then be understood with minimal explanatory text, it clearly exhibited an essay character. Further, such a series conforms to the formula used by photographers who succeeded in increasing the number of their stories published in Life in the post-war years.<sup>46</sup> This supports the claim that the photo essay, as it was conventionalized in Life magazine, existed and was in use in Germany in the late 1920s.

Certain techniques, however, including morticing photographs into

one another, presenting photographs in other than rectangular form, and retouching photographs, were used more frequently and often with greater finesse in the German publications than in Life. This indicates that these layout techniques were conventional within the German photo essay, but were never successfully incorporated into the American form. Despite this presentational difference in layout, it is clear that the German emigres who succeeded in producing photo essays for the picture agencies and magazines in America were using an approach compatible with what they had seen in several German magazines. Thus, they were able to take part in developing the photo essay form in the United States.

## V

Another important and related precedent had been established in the context of the German picture magazine: the photograph was considered as an "authored" work. Credit lines routinely appeared with photographs published in MIP, HIZ, and Die Dame from the mid-1920s on. Whether the credit named the photographer, the agency, or both, it established that the photograph had been created by that source. The credit implied that the photograph could not be viewed as a simple mirror of the subject, but had been constructed as the result of an interpretive process. For AIZ to omit names from its credit lines supports this point. The "worker-photographer" responsible for a series of photographs was endangered by their publication in a magazine frankly in opposition to the rising ideology of fascism. The photographs were made from a point of view, and the photographer was responsible for that position.

The magazines recognized this and took account of it when assignments were made. As photographs began to appear in series in the German magazines,

the series were compiled from a variety of sources. As the essay evolved, however, increasingly a single photographer's name appeared on the credit line. Not only was it easier in many cases than gathering photographs from a variety of sources; assigning a single photographer to a subject meant that the resulting photographs would be more comprehensive and would combine more easily into a coherent narrative sequence.

In the early years of Fortune, credits appeared with most photographs, and in Life the practice was routine. The widespread use of credits thus provides a way of assessing how a German photographer's style adapted to the new context of the American magazines. By the early 1930s, photo-journalism was occurring in an international arena. Picture agencies were operating across national boundaries, and specific photographers came to be recognized for their own stylistic approach to certain events. The combination of these factors created a context in which photographers could have their work published in several different magazines. Also, as the emigration began, editors carried with them the knowledge of photographers whose work they admired.

The fact that Erich Salomon's candid photography was well known for showing behind the scenes at important political meetings undoubtedly accounts for the appearance of his photographs in Fortune in the early 1930s. It was evident that Salomon's style was appropriate to settings outside the political arena. A conductor of a philharmonic orchestra, for example, could be captured in the low light of a concert hall using Salomon's approach, and he received several assignments to document such events.<sup>47</sup> The power and individuality of his style is evident from the similar ways his photographs were used in the several publications where his work appeared. His photo essays often lacked the variety of angles and distances

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from his subjects that other photographers used. Instead, a greater number of his photographs would be incorporated into an essay, usually including a series of three or four small photographs of the same scene to show subtle variations in the interaction of the participants.

Wolfgang Weber began his journalistic career as a writer, and his photoessays which appeared frequently in MIP and HIZ nearly always were accompanied by text he had written. His ability to cover a wide range of subjects in ways easily presented as photo essays contributed to the frequent appearance of his work in MIP. He traveled widely on assignment, often to Third World countries. Although he never emigrated to the United States, his coverage of international issues made him a valuable contributor to Life. His comprehensive coverage was adapted to the Life practice of presenting long essays on interlocking aspects of events, seen for example, in his photo essay on the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.<sup>48</sup>

Martin Munkaszi's versatility is evident from the variety of ways his work was used in the German magazines. Die Dame often used his single photographs as full-page illustrations, and the simple graphic composition characteristic of his work also accounted for the frequent appearance of Munkaszi photographs on the cover of HIZ. Yet he also undertook complex assignments: a series he made in Liberia, covering the social and political aspects of this independent African nation ran in several issues of HIZ.<sup>49</sup> A photograph from this assignment appeared as a single image in Die Dame, as an illustration for a short story,<sup>50</sup> and several others were included in a photo essay Life published in 1937 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Liberia's independence.<sup>51</sup> He remained in Germany, contributing photographs of Nazi parades to the German publications until 1935 when he emigrated to the United States.<sup>52</sup> His work appeared frequently thereafter in the

American magazines, showing the same versatility he had developed as a German photojournalist.

Fritz Goro, on the other hand, began to specialize in coverage of scientific issues after his emigration. While in Germany, he had developed an approach appropriate to the photo essay form, as seen, for example, in his coverage of Germany's largest Benedictine monastery.<sup>53</sup> Working for Life in the United States, he adapted his techniques increasingly to the coverage of important developments in science and medicine. This demanded a close analytical view of complex concepts. He succeeded in photographing these subjects in ways which made them easily comprehensible to the average reader by looking for the human element of each topic and interesting visual aspects of the research.

Alfred Eisenstaedt was the most prolific of Life's initial staff of four photographers. The range of his capabilities covered many of the themes Life was emphasizing. In some cases he covered topics that paralleled closely work he had done in Germany. The annual winter social scene at St. Moritz, for example, looked very similar to Sun Valley when photographed by Eisenstaedt for Life.<sup>54</sup> He covered a number of colleges on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>55</sup> In Life, these photo essays were often longer, emphasizing a different aspect of school life on each double page, suggesting that he had spent longer and taken more photographs. In MIP, however, the layout design, and hence the emphasis in these school essays was different. Photographs Eisenstaedt took of a British military academy, for example, were edited by Lorant to emphasize the rows of cadets.<sup>56</sup> In Life, the regimentation of a military school was shown in numerous details of the cadets daily lives.<sup>57</sup> The versatility of Eisenstaedt's style is evident in the variety and number of subjects he covered, a prime factor in his continuing

contribution to Life as a staff photographer.

## VI

The cosmopolitan tendencies of the Weimar years in Germany and the political upheaval prior to the second world war combined with the expansion of photojournalism as a profession with international dimensions to create a new context for the flow of photographers, picture editors, picture agencies, and ideas about the form and content of contemporary photojournalism across national boundaries. In this context, the form of the photo essay, as it was developed in Germany, demonstrated that it could be adapted, with variations in conventions of layout, to the pages of the first American mass-circulation picture magazine. Germans who came to America found that they could adapt their styles to the evolving patterns of American photojournalism, and their work contributed to the development of the photo essay in the United States. Many of the subjects that had appeared in the prominent German picture magazines, specifically MIP and HIZ, paralleled topics covered by Life, and occasionally the same photographs were republished in American magazines.

However, the way these topics were inflected in the German magazines, primarily by their repeated coverage and the content of the accompanying text, was absent from the American magazines. The institutionalization of daily life, political strife between widely disparate social factions, the ambivalence over Germany's growing military strength, the pride in a new form of air power which the development of the zeppelin represented, the pervasiveness of sport and physical fitness as a national goal--these themes run through each of the German magazines examined here, presented differently according to the political point of view of each publication.

The absence of these themes from the American magazines indicates that they were not compatible with American ideology as expressed through the national picture magazines. This suggests that while photography and its application as a medium for conveying news are international, the ideological content of the medium--the way its repetition of themes resonates with the concerns of its audience, and hence its use as a communication medium--requires further adaptation. After 1933, it remained for the form, content, and social practice of the new photojournalism as it had evolved in Germany to be recast in ideological themes appropriate to the American cultural context. The popularity of the Major American picture magazines attests to their success in acculturating the photo essay to represent themes consistent with the dominant ideology of American readers over the next several decades.

# FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Stuart Hall, "The Social Eye of Picture Post," Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 2:87 (Spring 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Former Life editor, Wilson Hicks refers to Fortune as "Life's most significant forerunner." Words and Pictures (New York: Harper and Row, 1952), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>John R. Whiting and George R. Clark, "The Picture Magazines," Harper's, Vol. 187 (July 1943), pp. 160-61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>5</sup>J.B. Brown, "Picture Magazines and Morons," American Mercury, Vol. 45 (December 1938), p. 407.

<sup>6</sup>Life, Vol. 2 (April 26, 1937), pp. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup>Maitland Edey, Great Photographic Essays from Life (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978).

<sup>8</sup>William Stott, Documentary Expression in Thirties America (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>9</sup>F. Jack Hurley, Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972).

<sup>10</sup>Theodore Peterson, Magazines in the Twentieth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 312.

<sup>11</sup>Donald P. Kent, The Refugee Intellectual: The Americanization of The Immigrants of 1933-41 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

<sup>12</sup>C. Zoe Smith-Nesterenko, "Black Star Picture Agency and Life Magazine: A Study of Cross-Cultural Influences," dissertation in progress, University of Iowa.

<sup>13</sup>Tim N. Gidal, Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evolution, 1910-33 (New York: Collier Books, 1971), p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>"Washington, D.C.," Fortune, Vol. 5 (February 1932), pp. 53-56, 118-22; "The Secretary of State of the U.S.A.," Fortune, Vol. 5 (March 1932), pp. 37-39, 136-38, 141-43; "Reconstruction Finance," Vol. 5 (April 1932), pp. 41-45.

<sup>15</sup>Theodore M. Brown, Margaret Bourke-White, Photojournalist (Ithaca, N.Y.: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, 1972), p. 36. Bourke-White, "Germany's Reichswehr," Fortune Vol. 7 (January 1933), pp. 49-57.

<sup>16</sup>Gidal, Modern Photojournalism.

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<sup>17</sup> Gidal, pp. 12-13; Ute Eskildsen, Photography and the Neue Sachlichkeit movement, Arts Council of Great Britain, Neue Sachlichkeit and German Realism of the Twenties (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978), p. 92.

<sup>18</sup> Gidal, pp. 11, 13.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Gay, Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 134.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Gidal, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Eskildsen, pp. 93-94.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Boyers, ed., The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectual (New York: Schocken Books, 1972); Robert E. Cazden, German Exile Literature in America 1933-50 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1970); Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America 1930-60 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); Jurgen Herbst, The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965).

<sup>25</sup> Peterson, p. 312.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel Mich, "The Rise of Photo-Journalism in the United States," Journalism Quarterly, 24:205 (September 1947).

<sup>27</sup> Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, A Concise History of Photography (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965), p. 253; Helmut Gernsheim, Creative Photography: Aesthetic Trends, 1839-1960 (New York: Bonanza Books, 1962), p. 212.

<sup>28</sup> Hicks, p. 34; see also Edey, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>29</sup> "Before Life the Camera was a Man," a slide show distributed through Images of Man series, Scholastic Books.

<sup>30</sup> Smith-Nesterenko, "Black Star Picture Agency and Life Magazine"; and Hanno Hardt and Karin B. Ohrn, "German Photojournalists and the American Picture Press: A Study of Emigres and their Contributions, 1933-45," research grant proposal submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1978.

<sup>31</sup> The assistance of Rudiger Scheidges and Barbara B. Becker was instrumental to the location and analysis of the emigres work.

<sup>32</sup> "The 1950 Detroit Workshop and the Life Essay Technique," a paper presented to the Photojournalis Division, Association for Education in Journalism annual convention, August 1979.

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<sup>33</sup>"Deutsche Eicheln 1933," Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, Vol. 12, No. 37 (September 21, 1933), p. 627.

<sup>34</sup>Heartfield, Photomontages of the Nazi Period (New York: Univers Books, 1977).

<sup>35</sup>"Ob schwarz, ob weiss--im Kampf vereint!" AIZ, Vol. 10, No. 26 (July 4, 1931), p. 517.

<sup>36</sup>"Die Sturmtruppen des Proletariats," AIZ, Vol. 5, No. 25 (1926), pp. 8-9.

<sup>37</sup>Tom Hopkinson, ed., Picture Post, 1938-50 (London: Penguin Press, 1970), frontispiece.

<sup>38</sup>Hicks, pp. 42-43.

<sup>39</sup>"Ach wie nett," Münchener Illustrierte Presse, Vol. 10, No. 5 (February 5, 1933), p. 145.

<sup>40</sup>Martin Munkaszi, "Was gibt es Neues in Königsbert?" Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Vol. 38, No. 50 (December 15, 1929), p. 2275; Munkaszi, "Was gibt es Neues in Halle?" HIZ, Vol. 39, No. 7 (February 16, 1930), p. 245.

<sup>41</sup>Die Dame, Vol. 59, No. 9 (January 1932), pp. 4, 5.

<sup>42</sup>"Petroleum," Fortune, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 1930), pp. 46-57.

<sup>43</sup>"In Colorado und Pennsylvania streiken 200,000 Bergarbeiter," AIZ, Vol. 7, No. 10 (1928), pp. 8-9; "Hinter den Kulissen des Kriminalgerichts," AIZ, Vol. 8, No. 29 (1929), pp. 4-5.

<sup>44</sup>"Ostpreussische Reise I-IV": "Den Korridor entlang," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 1 (January 3, 1932), pp. 3-5; "Obdachlosenasyll in der Turnhalle," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 2 (January 10, 1932), pp. 28-29; "Der Kleine Grenzverkehr," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 3 (January 17, 1932), pp. 52-53; and "Das stille Königsbert," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 7 (February 14, 1932), pp. 148-49.

<sup>45</sup>For example, Wolfgang Weber, "Wie war is eigentlich? I. Die Schrecken der Inflation," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 25 (June 19, 1932), pp. 644-56.

<sup>46</sup>Dykhouse, "The 1950 Detroit Workshop and the Life Essay Technique."

<sup>47</sup>"Bruno Walter dirigiert," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 11 (March 13, 1932), p. 270; "Toscanini," Fortune, Vol. 5, No. 5 (May 1932), pp. 44-45; "Furtwängler dirigiert," Die Dame, Vol. 60, No. 15 (April 1933), pp. 10-11.

<sup>48</sup>"Romans in Ethiopia," Life, Vol. 3, No. 16 (October 18, 1937), pp. 43-47.

<sup>49</sup>"Vier wochen im modernen Negerstaat: Liberia," HIZ, Vol. 39, No. 25 (June 22, 1930), cover and pp. 1139-41; "II. Das geistige Antlitz Liberias," HIZ, Vol. 39, No. 28 (July 13, 1930), pp. 1283-85; "III. Gerichtswesen in

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Liberia," Vol. 39, No. 32 (August 10, 1930), pp. 1451-52.

<sup>50</sup>Die Dame, Vol. 58, No. 16 (May 1931), p. 13.

<sup>51</sup>"Liberia celebrates 50 years of Independence," Life, Vol. 3, No. 11 (September 13, 1937), pp. 87-89.

<sup>52</sup>Gidal, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup>"Mönche erobern Neuland," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 39 (September 25, 1932), pp. 1051-53.

<sup>54</sup>Life, Vol. 2, No. 10 (March 8, 1937), cover and pp. 20-27.

<sup>55</sup>"Lausanner Pensions-Mädchen," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 31 (July 31, 1932), pp. 835-37; "Vassar: A Bright Jewel in U.S. Educational Diadem," Life, Vol. 2, No. 5 (February 1, 1937), cover and pp. 24-31; "Bennington: An Experiment in Progressive Education that Works," Life, Vol. 3, No. 21 (November 22, 1937), pp. 36-42.

<sup>56</sup>"Das sind die Dartmouth-Kadetten," MIP, Vol. 9, No. 30 (July 24, 1932), pp. 800-801.

<sup>57</sup>"West Point," Life, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November 30, 1936), cover and pp. 45-49.